

*Civilisation and Races of Southern
Italy* 405

the recollection of the heroes whose
valour and
loyalty were familiar to them in the
songs which
already formed part of their knightly
traditions.

They further localised the romantic
tales which
they brought with them into the land
they con-
quered. Thus the Charlemagne legend
recounts

that the Peers of France, returning
from the Holy
Land, gave to two mountains of Sicily
the names
Roland and Olivier. Next in fame
among the
chansons de geste is that which
surrounds the name
of William of Orange. Already at the
close of
the eleventh century, poems were in
common

currency and in the vulgar speech of
North France
about this hero. The story which
holds first
place in this famous cycle is that of
the battle
of Aliscans; it is highly probable that it
was

composed in Sicily at the end of the
same cent-
ury. The wars of Roger against the
Moslems
of the island coloured largely these
gestes where
the enemy is generally the Saracen,

A third cycle, the Celtic epic of
Arthur, was
brought into the south by the followers
of Guiscard
and Roger, and in the twelfth century
the Lom-
bards of Sicily, taught by their Norman
masters,
believed that the great British King lay
imprisoned

under Mongibel (Etna). But their
own deeds
gave to the Normans of Italy a fresh
epic and the
deeds of Guiscard, Bohemund, and
Tancred be-
came as memorable well-nigh as those
of the
Paladins. The heroes of the William
cycle are
connected on genealogically with
the three